1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Moving eastward across Northern Greece, I learned from the agricultural officials of Serrai (in Macedonia) that more and more unwilling people there were being forced to get rid of their farms and go down to the cities. This is not because of any lack of love for the soil but because the yields in the mountainous areas make it impossible to earn a living. Economic necessity has forced a change of location, but not yet a change in attitude. One official compared Macedonia and Thessaly, with respect to attachment for the land: "I would say that there has been much greater security through the years in Thessaly, which has led to more fondness for their fields; here in Northern Greece the constant uprooting of families has created an uneasiness and therefore a tendency for people to part with their land."

In Thrace, farther eastward, the peasant is still attached to the soil but "he is not stuck to it absolutely body and soul," as one peasant expressed it. These areas of Macedonia and parts of Thrace depend largely on growing Oriental tobacco, a commodity sometimes moving slowly on world markets, with agricultural depression a serious consequence. Here the man-land bond is loosening.

The peasants living at the head of the Chalkidike peninsula (central Macedonia) around Polygyros, the capital of the prefecture, enjoy relative prosperity and are not willing to leave their land. Nor is there any desire to emigrate, although five or six families have sent sons to Italy to study agriculture and veterinary science in the expectation that they would return better prepared to improve agriculture and kindred pursuits.

In the rich plains of Thessaly, south from Macedonia, the mechanization of agriculture is apparent everywhere. When harvests are good, people are optimistic about the future, secure about their food supply. Peasants there have invested heavily in tractors, which have had an interesting effect on attitudes toward the land. In this area of good soil, where scientific farming is increasingly practiced, the basis of the attachment is changing from the traditional idea of land ownership as a sacred trust closely bound in with the fortune of one's immediate family to a view of land as a source of financial gain. Here in Thessaly the rural man is changing from peasant to farmer, in contrast to the hard-pressed people in the northern mountains who are forced to move to cities for bread and, far away from their land, still cling to peasant values.

When a peasant in Central Greece was asked what a family from his village would do if it received $500 from America, he said: "A man would be more apt to buy fields rather than improve his home; of course, if his house leaks and he has enough land, he would start with the house but, generally speaking, a peasant from my village thinks it more important to own more land than to build a big house. Of course, we do have another

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

Another village in Thessaly tackled this crucial problem of strip holdings in its own way. This village, Nees Karyes, south of Larissa on the main road to Lamia, was another place the director of agriculture wished to visit. On our way there we picked up the agriculturist who, like a county agent, had been the chief adviser to the peasants while they were planning their successful scheme. He recounted the development of the program as we drove to the village. The people of Nees Karyes, like those of Thomai, were also refugees, but they had come to Greece much earlier, in 1907, from Eastern Roumelia, now a part of Bulgaria. Otherwise, they were ordinary villagers, some with more land, some with less. It was the peasants with less who devised a plan.

After World War II, they realized that they could no longer make ends meet with what they had. In May 1952 twenty-three of the men with the smallest holdings in the village came together to talk about what would happen if they pooled their farms and other resources. The land of these 23 families totaled about 575 acres, showing an average per family below that for the other 200 families in the village, but well above the figure for Thessaly. They talked and talked, swapped ideas and contacted the agricultural-extension agent in Larissa. In October 1952 they held their first assembly. They decided to buy a tractor and to follow the advice of the agricultural specialist as to improved methods, type of seed, kind of equipment needed. They decided to combine the 575 acres for production purposes into one farm. The various types of soil are now used to best advantage. Fortunately, the first year had been a good crop year and successes far outstripped expectations. The cooperative into which they organized themselves bought a combine for 60,000 drachmas ($4,000 at the rate of exchange in 1952). But since they would have had to pay out five sixths of that to others as charges for harvesting their grain, they are in reality only 10,000 drachmas ($667) in debt, and sure of the future.

Since this idea of pooling land sounded so much like a collective farm on the Communist model, the government carefully investigated to be sure no subversive influences were at work before it granted any loans. The planners proved to be far from subversive, merely independent peasants with a common-sense approach to an old, old problem.

Our first stop in the village was at a big brick-walled granary almost completed by the cooperative. There we talked with the villager who was the cooperative's secretary. He paid great tribute to the part the government agricultural worker had played in the success of their undertaking. While we fingered the heaped golden grain on the cement floor of the impressive building, I asked, "What made you begin this cooperative in the first place?" The answer was a single eloquent word: "Necessity."

The founders of this cooperative, the twenty-three village families with

1:Sanders Z-54 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

acres a day with a tractor. "Before the war," he went on to say, "a peasant who tried something new was considered an amusing person with a loose screw in his head. Even the agriculturists were received with 'what have those educated people got to tell us who have callouses from working?' Also, the agriculturist has learned more about agriculture and more about people, changing for the better."

The director's wife agreed with what we had learned from Alekos about the effect of mechanization upon woman's work. She did point out that machine harvesting and threshing had relieved the housewife of an old burden of feeding many people for long periods of time when the work was done by hand. However, the women still plant tobacco and cultivate cotton. Men are helping out a little more, but this hard field work in Thessaly is still a woman's job. Here again there is some compensation for the women. Although they have as much work now as before, they have more money. They will change into better dresses in the evening and go for a walk on a weekday, something much less common before the last war. Finally, the director's wife pointed out, those families who own twenty to twenty-five acres of land have acquired ease and prosperity and are becoming a well-to-do peasantry.

Elsewhere around Larissa we inquired about the spread of mechanization. The tractor dealers in the town put Alekos' problems in a somewhat different light. We learned, for example, that a 46-horsepower tractor, with starter and pneumatic tire wheels, cost 55,000 drachmas ($3,667); the purchaser had to pay 40 percent in cash and could sign a bill for the remaining 60 percent, payable after 18 months to the Bank of Greece at the rate of 16 percent interest. Dealers and some of the local government officials considered this rate most oppressive.

A second problem was that of spare parts, most of which had to be imported. Foreign-exchange difficulties and import restrictions make this difficult; when the parts were not available, the owner of the tractor was greatly inconvenienced, to put it mildly. We got some idea of the problem of spare parts when we learned that there were 25 dealers of tractors of different makes in Larissa alone. The dealers attempted to teach the purchasers how to use the machine and, a year or so before, the government had set up traveling schools which instructed in the operation and care of the tractor and afterwards gave examinations for licenses. That year, out of 1,200 farm workers examined, only 700 were given a license.

Dealers also indicated that the buyer of a tractor usually ordered a plow and a disk-harrow, with many requesting grain drills. This equipment adds greatly to the total cost. Most of the tractors were bought by individuals or by a group of three to five peasants, with only twenty to twenty-five tractors belonging to cooperatives.

In the tractor land of Larissa everything seems fine now. As in the case

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thrace

land but work rented land or as farm laborers; and three are in business (baker, coffeehouse proprietor, and dressmaker). Some of these landowners, in addition to farming, run a local business, or practice a trade such as carpentering and smithing, but their basic orientation is toward the land.

Being farmers, one might assume that they could grow some of their own food. A few manage to do this. Of the 589 acres of cultivated land belonging to the village people, 338 acres are in tobacco. This cash crop, therefore, takes up about 57 percent of all arable land. Corn accounts for 187 acres, vegetable gardens 25 acres, potatoes 20 acres, alfalfa 6 acres, and other crops 13 acres. But no matter what methods one uses in Dafnon, it is impossible to grow enough food for 1145 people on the shallow land. There are two ways out: first, grow a cash crop such as tobacco, sell it, and use the income to buy food and other necessities; the second is for a large number of families to be resettled elsewhere and thus provide sufficient land for those that remain. The latter suggestion is impossible, since other rural areas are also overcrowded and the opportunities in the cities are not yet equal to the demand of those making the exodus from the rural areas. Indeed, cities have been discouraging the influx of new families in search of work.

This leaves only the other possibility of getting most of the family income from tobacco alone. Here, again, the tobacco producer is caught at the mercy of the market or in the "price scissors." Without food of his own production, he has to sell his tobacco at any price offered simply in order to have bread for his children. The producer, according to this study of Dafnon, knew that tobacco prices, including the premium paid by the state, had risen over prewar prices 260 times. This was small consolation for, in reading *Vema*, an Athenian newspaper dated December 14, 1951, he also learned that costs of foodstuffs had risen 425 times, clothing 554 times, fuel 394 times, sundries 367 times, manufactured goods 467 times, and imported supplies 416 times.

It is difficult to grow tobacco, particularly the Oriental type (Basmas variety) that requires so much manipulation, leaf by leaf, with an average leaf being four inches long and two and one-half inches wide. The first plowing is usually done in February or March. Seedbeds are heavily manured, and the seed is well mixed with sand and ashes, then sown. The beds are pressed down by foot for better germination; sieved manure is scattered over them; and the beds are watered. This watering is continued, usually morning and evening, until the end of May when the plants are ready to be transplanted. Because of this need for water, the beds are always located near some accessible water supply.

The tobacco fields are usually plowed under three times before the tobacco plants are set out. The same fields are used for tobacco year after

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thrace

year, since there is not sufficient land to permit crop rotation. This means that extensive use has to be made of costly chemical fertilizers, about 260 pounds to the acre. Formerly, when fewer Turkish families lived in the village, they were able to keep more animals and had plenty of animal manure which, according to old-time residents of the area, gave a 40 percent higher yield. Since then the land has become more worn out, and more reliance must be placed on chemical fertilizers.

The transplanting of the young tobacco plants from the seedbed to the regular fields is done in rows which have been marked in the field by straight lines, drawn by a hoe, about a foot apart. For each row the peasant uses a stick to make holes three inches apart, into which he puts the plants and presses the soil firmly down around the plant. He waters them immediately but is careful not to get any water on the tobacco leaves themselves. Ten days later he hoes around the plants and follows this with a second hoeing ten to fifteen days later.

Usually tobacco-leaf collectors start about July 15 and continue their work until the end of October. They are up by 2 A.M. to gather the leaves before sunrise, and gather only once in a while in the evening. There are four or five collections from each plant during the season, with each leaf picked just at its maturity. During the daytime the members of the family string these leaves into long strands which are then hung up to dry in the sun. Once dried, they are hung in dry sheds or on the rafters of the house.

In November, after the first dews fall, the village home manipulation starts and continues until the middle of March. The purpose of this manipulation is to sort out the leaves into three categories: the first category includes the best small leaves; the second includes the larger sound leaves; and the third includes all those that do not meet the previous qualifications and yet are sound. This last class is called *refouzia*. Any broken leaves are thrown away or else made into pipe tobacco. The leaves of each class are made into bales of from 55 to 70 pounds and then stored in a dry, protected place for the merchant. By the time the baling has been completed, the family must begin once more the cycle of preparing and sowing the seedbed to start the next year's crop. The tobacco farmer, whether from Macedonia, Thrace, or Central Greece, largely because of the traditional pattern of manipulation, is on a twelve-month work year somewhat like the American dairy farmer. His year contrasts markedly with that of the Peloponnesian villager whose seasonal change was described at the opening of this chapter, or with the wheat farmer of Thessaly. Furthermore, what he grows he cannot eat but must sell as best he can to buy his food.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

have not reached. They also help in the gathering of olives, grapes, and many other products requiring patient labor.

The woman is increasingly being viewed today as a supplementary source of labor in the fields, to be employed only when the need is urgent, although regional variations are still important. When she does go to the field, she may take the baby and the small children along and care for them as she works. Various explanations are offered for this lightening of field labor by women. Today, more of the village women have seen how the city women live and have resolved to put city ways into practice in their homes and villages. Furthermore, men seem to be showing more interest in their farms due to the help the government is giving in providing fruit trees, opening up of farm-to-market roads, and helping the peasant participate more actively in the national economy. Agricultural and home-economics extension workers, who now visit the majority of villages, not only tell the men that it is their job to do the field work, but they also show the men better methods for reducing the work load. Where tractors exist, the woman is relieved of much field work and can occupy herself with other tasks. She works more on her loom, takes care of her children, and cleans her house. She also has more time for gardening on a plot fairly close to the house. One recognizes the need for this in a place such as Ioannina (Epirus) where peasants in the outlying villages, with plenty of land near their house, buy at the city market vegetables which they could have grown at home if the women had had sufficient time.

Keeping the Family Well

Work, however, is not the only responsibility of a Greek housewife. Any ailing person becomes the immediate concern of the mother or the mother-in-law, with the older woman usually considered wiser in the mysteries of folk medicine. The patient also becomes the concern of the neighbors for, as one man put it, "when somebody gets sick, everybody goes to visit him and to look after him." For quite understandable reasons, the living standards of rural Greece are far below those found in Athens or in most countries of the West. Consequently, health practices, many of them surrounded with superstitions, are the outgrowth of the experience of people who for centuries have faced pain, illness, and death without the benefits of the accumulated medical discoveries of the modern world.

Indeed, for much illness the peasant has a supernatural rather than a scientific explanation. As one writer has put it:

> The whole of popular medicine is based upon the knowledge of charms and incantations. Many simples and drugs are of course known and employed; but it is still generally believed, as it was in the old time, that "there would be no good in the herb without the incantation." For the most ordinary diseases are

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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the relative upon whom he might need to call at a later date. Many men are careful to visit two or more shops from time to time "so as not to offend any of the proprietors." Also, as one informant put it, "The peasant comes from the field, washes up, goes for a drink to a coffeehouse where he might be tied by blood, but in order to do business he goes to other coffeehouses to find people with whom to arrange use of animals for plowing, etc., and will stop for a drink with these people."

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Anyone trying to understand the sociology of Greek village life needs to pay special attention to these coffeehouse groups. First of all, the regular patrons of each coffeehouse can be viewed as a group whose members possess certain bonds in common. They have heard many of the same stories; they have learned to react in almost the same way to the buffoon, the over-important person, and the fellow villager constantly seeking sympathy. Although they may frequent a second coffeehouse, they are apt to feel a primary loyalty to their first choice and will find any number of reasons to justify their opinion that it is the best coffeehouse in the village.

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This general group, however, most of the time is broken down into cliques, varying in size from two during the day to as many as seven persons by evening. Each group has its own informal leader. According to Photiadis: "The informal leader in the coffeehouse gives the other members of his clique group his advice and the satisfaction that they are associating with a person of higher status, while he has the satisfaction of performing his role, the dynamic aspect of his status, which is his reward." Therefore, when some outsider, such as an agricultural agent, approaches the farmers at a particular table, the informal leader considers him a rival. "The agent is a person of higher status who can talk about things the others cannot. This exclusive selling of ideas makes the informal leader feel that his authority is lowered in the eyes of his subordinates, and as a result, he fears that he will lose the satisfaction he has had." No wonder, then, that he is very likely to oppose the ideas which the agricultural agent is trying to advance.

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Of special interest is the way news spreads from one clique to the next as part of the community-wide decision on some proposal new to the village. Photiadis takes as an illustration the use of a new insecticide which had been demonstrated by the agricultural agent to a number of farmers earlier in the day:

> The cliques which have members who have seen the demonstration will start discussing the matter and, after a series of objections and agreements, they will probably reach a decision or have split decisions. The opinion of the informal leader during this discussion has a considerable influence on certain members.
>
> Around the table of each clique there are usually one or more persons belonging to other cliques, or there are isolates sitting with the clique. These "isolates" . . . often move from table to table exchanging ideas or presenting the

1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

decision of the previous group as their own. The store owner and the waiter, who know everyone's business, present the opinion of the group on the matter while they are serving them. In this way the uninformed cliques are informed of the matter and the others have a new aspect of the topic for discussion if it differs from their own. Through this process, each clique's opinion diffuses through the coffeehouse. The rate of this diffusion varies according to the importance of the topic. If the subject is more important than usual, the leaders will find some means of discussing it among themselves, or a number of people may ask the opinion of informal leaders belonging to other cliques.

But the matter does not rest there. Many people move from one coffeehouse to another and introduce as their own the general consensus prevailing in the coffeehouse from which they have come. Thus, the men of the community tend to form a "public opinion" on a matter, frequently basing their decisions on either flimsy or inaccurate evidence. They prefer to be psychologically related to what others in their clique or coffeehouse think rather than to be individualistic and out of step with the rest. Truly, there is in Greece a "coffeehouse jury."

The Coffeehouse as a Mixed Blessing

The coffeehouse has its critics throughout Greece. Those responsible for improving the economic situation cite the economic disadvantages resulting from the unproductive expenditures at the coffeehouse as well as the many hours wasted there. This is recognized as a regional matter, for in many villages, such as those on Mount Pelion near Volos, one seldom sees people at the coffeehouse during the day. But in many of the mountain villages elsewhere, where economic opportunities are particularly lacking, more time is spent in such places.

Some oppose the coffeehouse on moral grounds. From time to time wives berate their husbands — not for economic inefficiency — but for drinking too much ouzo or for gambling away money that the family desperately needs. It also is said to corrupt youth. The nomarch of Thessalonike, Kostis Koukourides, pointed out: "The coffeehouses are our misfortune. I have two objections to them: the lost time and the bad habits of drinking and gambling. They also corrupt the youth, for in earlier times a boy had to be twenty-five years of age to go into the coffeehouse and would then never sit with the elders. Now he does so, which shows that he is losing respect for his elders."

Schoolteachers and agricultural-extension workers, although admitting that the coffeehouse can at times serve as a useful forum, generally think of it as a place where much misinformation spreads. It irritates an agricultural worker to think that he has persuaded a peasant to adopt some new farm practice only to learn the next day that the peasant has decided against it

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

because of a conversation the previous evening with his cronies at the coffeehouse. One villager got to the crux of the matter: "In the coffeehouse we get into arguments over our political leaders and don't attend to our fields. We do this because we are uneducated and people do little to help us, and so we spend our time on foolish things. The government doesn't send people here to instruct us; we are farming the way our fathers did."

With the spread of the program of agricultural extension, perhaps this peasant can no longer legitimately make the same complaint, but the chances are that the men of his village are still arguing about many matters and, perhaps in his opinion, spending their time on "foolish things."

Even the critics admit that there are still many conditions which encourage the men to patronize the coffeehouse quite apart from the attractions already described. For most village men, home is a most unattractive place in the evening. Dimly lit, poorly heated in cold weather, dominated by women and their silly prattle, the home cannot begin to compete with the masculine company found at the coffeehouse. Furthermore, most men can think up perfectly valid reasons (in their opinion, at least) for going to the coffeehouse: they have a business matter to talk over; they want to know how some world crisis is shaping up; they need some advice on a farming decision.

Should they be found at the coffeehouse during the daytime, when conscientious farmers might be finding something worthwhile to do, they do not experience many twinges of conscience. They are not pricked by any Puritan ethic that teaches them constantly to be busy; instead, they save their energies for the time and place where it is unquestionably in their interest to work hard and long. When no such occasion presents itself, what more could a man ask than to enjoy his leisure, unplanned and unsought though it be? Nor does he think that it is up to him to seek out productive uses of his time. If people have good employment opportunities, they will seek him out, and he will respond. If he is from the tobacco-growing districts, the chances are that he has put his only resources (wife and children) to work for him and can take his ease until he must return to see how the work has progressed. He has no idle capital to invest but does his best with the human labor at his command. When heavy work is required, he will do his part, but when that is done others can harvest, string, and manipulate the tobacco. He provides the entrepreneurial skill.

Perhaps the coffeehouse and the attitudes of its habitués clash more strongly with American value orientations than do any other aspects of village life. To the Greek peasant, to be idle is no sin; to converse in the kouvenda can be as satisfying as to be a spectator sportsman; to seek to learn "what's new" if you live in a village is just as worthy as the search for novelty which motivates many in the United States. To get away from the women, the Greek peasant does not have to go on a long hunting trip to

1:Sanders Z-5H (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

875 tives, and financial matters. "But a really pernicious element in the village,
871 today," said the director, going back to an earlier theme, "is the half-
educated person, who sits in the coffeehouse, reads the newspapers, and
[554] gives his half-baked ideas. He thereby undermines the influence of the
teacher." Nevertheless, many dedicated teachers exert tremendous influ-
[242] ence despite all the handicaps they face. He mentioned the case of the teacher in Phlorina (western Macedonia), a Greek refugee from Russia, who in the late 1920s planted with the children in the school garden the first apple trees, destined to become the basis of the extensive orchards now in that area. The teacher persuaded the villagers to take slips from these trees for planting. But not all teachers show this initiative. "We fail to teach the teachers how to teach the children how to behave and meet the various problems as they arise." The fault does not lie with the children, since they have an incredible thirst for learning: "To the child, the school is cherished," he concluded.

871 It was always easy to get people not only to compare education in the
184 past with the present but also to get discussions of the regional differences in emphasis upon education. In a Macedonian village I once listened to a
[231] long discussion with a local official and an outsider, originally from Southern Greece, who had brought a truckload of beehives from Chalkidike to pasture on the special variety of blossoms there. The beekeeper asserted: "The standard of living in the Peloponnesos is higher than here in Northern Greece. In my village there has been for many years a gymnasium, and you won't find anyone who hasn't gone to school, while here you don't find people with the same interest. That is why the standard of living is higher in the Peloponnesos."

[175] But the Macedonian would not accept such a comparison without a verbal challenge: "You forget that you got liberated almost one hundred years before we did. We had five hundred years of Turkish rule over our heads; it is not true that we don't want our children to get a better education. For instance, in my village of Balta we have a semigymnasium where there are 365 students. The state wants to close that school, and we said that if they did this we would be obliged to send our children to a distant
[875] gymnasium. We have eight teachers in that school; four are paid by the state, but we local people give them a supplement since their salary is not sufficient; the other four teachers are paid entirely by the parents. In the first three grades each pupil pays $3 per month and in the next three grades $4 per month. This shows we value education. Everything goes for Southern Greece; we are neglected here."

875 Here, at least, was one indication that the teacher was much appreciated. But throughout my village visits I also found those who were impatient with the teachers. One Greek official, who knows many parts of his country

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the economic level of doctors or large storekeepers. Now this factor has diminished considerably concerning tobacco producers and has also affected smaller storekeepers, allowing less chance for them to expand their enterprises.[4]

He concludes that the ends of the "social pyramid became closer and it is difficult to separate the second from the third class, while the upper class became smaller." Land ownership and money, two factors which were stressed before the war, are no longer very important, for a peasant can rent a field quite inexpensively. With the prices of tobacco as low as they are, land is not in as great demand.

Village Organizations

Almost every village today has one or more clubs or associations which have been promoted by governmental officials and people from the city in an effort to effect some change in the rural way of life. Most of these organizations appear to be well intentioned and are accepted as such by the local people, but this does not mean that the peasants become eager joiners or loyal members. Other village groups have much deeper local roots: mutual-aid groups and the cooperatives; the church board, the school board, and the community council. In many villages I inquired about the formally organized groups. Three widely scattered communities listed a variety of associations, some of which will be described more fully below:

Ano Kleitoria (Peloponnesos): community council, church board, school board, and Friends of the Forest.

Kalivi (Attica): the regular boards, five cooperatives, agro club, hunting club, home-economics club.

Polygyros (Chalkidike, Macedonia): the regular boards, two cooperatives (agricultural, apiary), boy scouts, lawyers' union, athletic club, professional union, medical union, olive-oil union, woman's philanthropic group.

One widespread and rapidly growing organization is the Rural Youth Club, which is modeled on the 4-H Club in the United States and promoted and supervised by the Extension Service of the Greek Ministry of Agriculture. Each member carries out an agricultural project, and together they operate a field owned by the club. In the Macedonian village referred to they also operate the village library located in the community building. They meet once a week to listen to a lecture, which is followed by recreational activities.

The women, too, have their own club. It is the home club or home-economics club similar to the Home Demonstration Club in the United States. It includes farm and nonfarm women, young and old. When field work is slack, the members attend classes in canning, sewing, and cooking, several times a month. The home agent helps them acquire knowledge and skill through lectures, demonstrations, and group participation. Often the club has its own workship and kitchen.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

tional director, H. B. Allen, in his book *Come Over Into Macedonia*. This program also trained Greek personnel, who were later to play important roles in the rural rehabilitation of Greece. With the coming in, under the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, of the American Mission to Greece, staffed and financed to deal with rural problems on a tremendous scale, the Near East Foundation decided about 1953 to end its Greek program in order to concentrate on assisting Near Eastern countries not receiving the support which was being officially extended to Greece by the American government. But one of its final achievements was the elementary, but nevertheless very useful, series of village studies conducted by its staff, to which frequent mention has been made in this book. The Near East Foundation was also instrumental in bringing the first Fulbright professor to Greece — Howard W. Beers, who taught the first courses in rural sociology to be given in Greece (at the Superior School for Agriculture, Athens) and who initiated the village studies just mentioned.

Several references have also been made to the American Farm School of Salonica, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1955. Founded by Reverend John Henry House, and continued by his son, Charles, and daughter-in-law, Ann, the school has been a vital force in the improvement of agriculture in many sections of Northern Greece. Bruce Lansdale, who succeeded Charles House as director, is also seeing to it that the school, through a community-development program, extends its influence even more directly to the villages. One of its activities is to offer short courses for groups of village leaders — priests, community presidents, and others — who come in to discuss how they can improve life in their communities.

Before World War II, the cooperative movement — described in Chapter 10 — sought to raise the economic conditions of the villages. The Food and Agriculture Organization Mission, viewing the prewar record of the cooperatives, cited in its 1946 report that these organizations had pioneered in the development of bucket pumps, tobacco water-storage tanks, and, through financial aid, the development of improved farm practices. Also, the national government had agricultural specialists who advised villagers on farm problems, but the success of these individuals was minimal as compared to postwar developments.

A survey of prewar programs of planned change, therefore, would indicate that either they reached only special areas where pioneering measures were being tried by private agencies or that they covered the country generally but relatively ineffectively through cooperatives and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture. This is not to imply that rural Greece was static during this period; only that it was not yet receiving the impact of planned change that was to characterize the years following World War II.

In turning to these postwar efforts, a selection has to be made from a wide variety of endeavors. The United Nations, for instance, helped in sev-

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

increased economic activity and not become a disturbing political force. A further fact is the peasant's chronic tendency to assume that he is not getting a square deal, or everything that is due him, because throughout his memory and that of his forebears he has been used to what he considers exploitation by a government or those from the city who would take advantage of him. No aid program can ever create a contented peasantry. Yet it is fair to ask what is being done in Greece today to help the individual villager solve the problems of immediate interest to him. The brightest hope, and one recognized by Munkman, is the creation of the Agricultural Extension Service, so organized as to take advantage of the long American experience in this field, the lessons learned by the Near East Foundation in Greece, and the application by dedicated Greeks of these lessons to contemporary conditions. A comparison between what is now available to the farmer and what was available before the war shows a tremendous gain in his behalf. To be sure, the peasant does not apply all that he is taught by the extension worker, and now and then administrative decrees (such as cutting from the budget the transportation item) limit the effectiveness of the extension worker. But in every part of Greece trained personnel are visiting the villagers and, as never before, showing an interest in their welfare and helping them think through their economic problems. Home-economics workers, working with the farm women, are also making considerable headway.

When I investigated social changes occurring between 1952-53 and 1959, those whose knowledge of Greek village life I have found to be most accurate said, "Certainly the greatest change you will find is the development of the agricultural-extension program and the service it is rendering." In other words, the central government is sending "change agents" [10] throughout Greece to help initiate improvements in farming and homemaking, and it is not waiting for the peasants to journey to Athens for answers to their problems. There are limits to what any professional staff can do, but to the extent that these extension workers, both men and women, receive necessary support, to that extent one will find rapid change in the countryside.

Mention has already been made, in Chapter 15, of the organizations being set up in Greek villages by the extension service as well as by the Queen's Fund. This fund concentrates primarily upon Northern Greece and through its village welfare centers seeks to raise the educational, cultural, and economic level of the villages. The King's Fund is interested in the villager. In September 1959 I visited near Athens the handsome Community Development Training Center, financed by this fund, where I met with a group of about fifty teachers who had been invited there, with all expenses paid, to study how teachers can be agents of community improvement. When I joined the group, they were listening to a lecture on scientific beekeeping so that they could talk intelligently on this subject to their pupils and the pupils' parents.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

commercial farmer. To be sure, the peasant does use some money, and some colonial powers in the past have found that the way to persuade "natives" to grow cash crops that the authorities wanted for export was to require that taxes be paid in money rather than in kind. To get the money, the peasant had to put in some cash crop, and he eventually moved toward commercial farming. Both types of farmers periodically become involved in debt: the peasant because he wants to spend an extravagant amount on some village festival, wedding, dowry, pilgrimage, or other noneconomic expenditure, whereas the modern farmer — though he also may try to keep up with the Joneses — goes into debt to buy machinery and other capital equipment. The peasant in earlier days went to the village moneylender, whose rates were oppressively high since he as a debtor could give little collateral, but now under government auspices credit cooperatives are moving out to the villages to provide loans to the villager on his livestock or an expected harvest. The modern farmer uses the financial institutions which are an integral part of a complex economy.

The production for a market highlights another difference. The peasant is primarily oriented toward the present; the modern farmer thinks of the future. The peasant, because he has had little economic margin with which to experiment or accumulate, tries to get through one crop year at a time. He may think vaguely about the future in terms of the hopes he has for his children, but seldom in hardheaded economic terms. When he begins to put out vines, to plant olive trees, or to make capital investment connected with agricultural production, the peasant is changing into a farmer — in this one trait, at least.

Both the peasant and the farmer operate in terms of what they consider to be their own self-interest, but they differ in their conceptions of what their self-interest is. The so-called obstinacy of the peasant is not just irrational opposition to change for the sake of holding back progress; it arises from his refusal to believe that the innovation suggested is to his own self-interest. Many times the peasant shrewdness shows up when some new scientific practice fails because of the soil and weather conditions of a given area. Demonstration, rather than talk, works more effectively with the peasant. The farmer, on the other hand, is more willing to take the word of the agricultural specialist, whether spoken or written, and may even do some experimenting on his own. If he is moderately successful, he has a margin for experimentation, whereas the peasant's food supply or source of the cash that he needs would be jeopardized if the innovation proved unsuccessful. Rather than fly to evils that he "knows not of," he sticks with the ways that have helped his people survive through the centuries.

This same conservatism shows up in the peasant's attitude toward his land. The peasant prizes land above all else, whereas the farmer views it as a commodity to be bought and sold. Land has been the peasant's secur-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

steel plow, or he can hire a tractor to do the job. The hiring of the tractor includes fuel and the services of a tractor operator.

Two farmers in Vasilika own tractors—one made the purchase in 1952 (a British Ferguson), the other in 1956 (a British Fordson). They were bought on the installment plan with credit extended by the Agricultural Bank of Greece. The tractor operators are a son and a nephew, respectively, of each of the owners. Both of the farmers who purchased tractors have landholdings which are large for the region, perhaps as many as sixty *stremata* but divided into tracts of some ten to twenty *stremata* each. Even if the land were not divided into such small parcels, there would not be enough return on so little land for economically sound use of a tractor. Both the bank management and the farmers are well aware of this, so that credit for the purchase of the machinery is given with the understanding that the owner will use the tractor as a capital investment and earn income from it by renting it out.

Farmers decide to hire or not to hire a tractor for the fall plowing on the basis of practical considerations of the moment. If weather conditions have been normal in the late summer and early fall, a farmer will be more likely to proceed with his horse-drawn plowing. If, however, early rains have delayed the cotton picking and all hands are needed in the cotton fields when the wheat fields should be plowed, a farmer may hire a tractor to be sure that the job gets done before the winter rains. Most of the farmers maintain a horse to use as a pack animal, in any case, so that it is obviously cheaper to plow with the horse. For increased efficiency, two farmers sometimes contribute one horse apiece, so that the team of horses working on each of their fields in turn will get the work done faster and at no additional cost. For wheat, the farmers say, the deeper plowing of the tractor is not important, so whenever possible they work with the animals. For cotton, as we shall see later, they believe tractor plowing increases the yield. Generally speaking, as one might expect, the farmers with fewer land resources tend to make less use of the tractors than those who can expect a good cash income from their fields and so can afford the outlay for the hire of a tractor.

After the broadcast sowing of the wheat (which is done on each *strema* immediately after it has been plowed) and the dragging of the fields, what remains is some light hoeing to be done in February and March, the spreading by hand of some chemical fertilizer at about the same time, and when the weather warms up, the spraying of a chemical weed killer by means of a hand-operated pressure pump. A farmer who does not own such a pump borrows one from a neighbor, and no charge is made for its use.

Harvesting of the wheat crop is done almost entirely by machine in Vasilika. Reaper and thresher combines, with their operators, make the rounds of the Boeotian plains villages at harvest time in June. The threshed wheat is weighed out in the fields and the machine operators are paid promptly with twelve percent of the crop. Chaff and straw left in the fields are collected by the household and made into small packages to be used for bedding down the animals. Each farmer may set aside four or five *stremata* of his wheat field to be reaped by hand with a standard sickle. He then hires a thresher with operator

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

243 at a cost of eight percent of the amount of the wheat threshed. This machine
427 leaves the straw in suitable condition for a baler which is hired next to press the straw into bales for food for the horses, mules, and donkeys.

[231] The harvesting machinery is privately owned by entrepreneurs in the
[471] towns. Simple threshers have been known and used on the Boeotian plain for a
[407] generation at least. The combine has appeared only since World War II and the hay baler only since the early 1950's. What accounts for the increasing willingness of the farmers to pay for machine operations on their wheat crop? Un-
[241] questionably, the growing efficiency of cotton production and the success of
[433] cotton and tobacco as cash crops enable the farmers to concentrate their labor and attention on cotton and tobacco production and to let the growing cash value
[242] of the crops make up for the loss of a certain percentage of the wheat crop. However, chemical fertilizers and weed killers have increased the wheat yields, and since payment for machine harvesting is in kind and not in cash, the entire transaction can be managed at what to the farmers is a minimal cost.

243 A household uses its own wheat for making its bread, and bread is still
437 literally the staff of life, the basic food for the people of the village. Wheat is also used for a kind of cereal called *trakhana* and for egg noodles. It is given as
[262] payment to the shepherds, whose wives turn the wheat income into their families'
438 bread supply. It continues to be used as an alternative medium of exchange for fish, olive oil, olives, coffee, and other household necessities not locally produced.
[231] As we have seen, the wheat straw is useful for the care of animals, and finally, in an emergency, some wheat can always be sold for cash.

246 A typical farmer of Vasilika reserves four or five *stremata* of his land
231 for oats, barley, and clover. These furnish food for the pack animals not only during the winter, but also in the early summer when the animals are permitted to graze in the oat and clover fields as the crops mature. A small corner of a
244 grain field may be used for lentils and beans, which add to the household's food
262 supply.

248 The crops which most interest the farmers of Vasilika today are cotton
312 and tobacco. Because of the dry summers in Boeotia cotton production in the region depends on irrigation. The high water-table makes well-pump irrigation
406 feasible. This system is also suited to the patterns of the rural social structure
[249] since it requires no centralized control or authority—each farmer household can dig its own well and work its own pump for its own fields. Any man who has
[621] not yet purchased a pump can hire the use of one owned by a farmer with
[427] adjacent fields.

Cotton became a significant cash crop for Vasilika around 1936 when one of the farmers who had heard about horse-driven well-pumps set one up for himself and the other farmers soon followed suit. Since World War II,
[652] British-manufactured diesel pumps bought on the installment plan with credit extended from the Agricultural Bank have replaced the horse-drawn equipment.
[427] Diesel pumps, like the tractors, may be rented by the day and the renter pays for fuel also. The market for the use of the pump goes beyond the village itself

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)363 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

since farmers in neighboring villages whose cotton fields lie adjacent to those of Vasilika's pump owners often want to hire the pumps. Here again, the rent income helps to defray the cost of the machinery.

Work is begun in the cotton fields shortly after the winter rains abate in February or March. Like the wheat fields, the cotton fields are sometimes plowed with horses. But, apart from the two farmers who own tractors, a number of farmers believe that the increased yield from the deeper plowing a tractor furnishes is more than worth the cost of renting the machines. Planting is ordinarily done by hand, but in 1956, a few farmers owned machine planters, and several farmers were borrowing them to try them out for the first time. The utilitarian and essentially nontraditional attitude to farming characteristic of Vasilika's inhabitants is illustrated by what one of the farmers had to say about using a machine planter. "I've planted half of my forty *stremata* of cotton by hand and the other half by machine to see which will turn out better. It's an experiment, you see." The machine planter must have been better, because in 1961 the same farmer had planted all his cotton by machine.

A few rows of maize are planted in the midst of the cotton fields to provide feed for chickens. Boys and young men like to roast and eat a few ears of corn out in the fields in late August, but corn is not considered proper food for human beings, and eating corn bread is believed to be a sign of dire poverty.

Once the cotton starts to grow, in late May and June, the hoeing begins. This is arduous labor which includes weeding, chopping up the weeds, and arranging the chopped weeds around the cotton plants as a mulch. Hoeing is done by the girls and women of the household, although men sometimes help. If a farmer has as many as twenty *stremata* planted to cotton, it is at this point that he may begin to use hired labor. Generally, the women of the village who are not busy in their own cotton fields are called upon first. These are the wives and daughters of the shepherds and the wives and daughters of the few farmers who have small enough land holdings so that their women have time left over after hoeing their own fields. When these supplies of excess labor are exhausted, farmers turn to relatives and non-kin in the neighboring villages.

The hired women who came from other settlements used to live in the house of the farmer who employed them, and used to be fed by him as well. In 1961, however, the farmers were reporting a system they much preferred—the use of tractors and trucks to bring women from the neighboring villages in the early morning and to take them home again in the evening. This obviated the necessity of housing and feeding four or five girls at a time during several different periods in the course of the cotton growing season (cotton is weeded and hand cultivated at least twice and sometimes three or four times during the season). The women of Vasilika's households were especially pleased at the change, because although they enjoyed having the company of the hired women, who danced and sang in the evenings, they very much disliked the additional work involved in housing them. After a long day in the fields, the farmers' wives and daughters had to prepare a hot evening meal for the work crew and, before dawn each morning they had to pack the bread, cheese, and olives which would provide a morning collation and a midday meal in the fields. The de-

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

cost because for the women, in particular, work on the farm was a way of life. "After all, what else would they do?" the visitors contended.

The discussion was extraordinarily illuminating because of the clarity with which it defined the villagers' overt conception of their own purpose in farming. The Vasilika men were thinking of their farms as commercial enterprises and were applying to their operation, however unwittingly, modern cost accounting principles whereby the labor of members of a family is a proper charge against profits in a family enterprise. The Vasilika farmers do not actually keep sets of books on their farming operations, but they do keep records, in an unsystematic way, of some transactions. Even though they do not keep exact accounts, they think of their agricultural activity as a business enterprise and evaluate the success or failure of their family farms in monetary terms. The visitors, in contrast, were recommending that Vasilika's farmers think of themselves as peasants, not as entrepreneurs. In other words, the visitors were suggesting that farming in the Boeotian countryside is a way of life. They meant that its satisfactions should come as much from the means as from the ends. For the women, at least, the visitors contended, work in the fields and in the subsidiary agricultural tasks was as good a way to pass the time as any other and that their work was merely one aspect of their roles as wives and daughters. The farmers said, in effect, that their women were performing specialized agricultural tasks primarily as a means to an end, the end of earning a profit from the operation of the family farm. Therefore, contended the farmers, when women do agricultural jobs, they are properly considered as agricultural labor, like the hired workers with which the households ordinarily supplement their manpower.

The villagers' arguments were entirely consistent with their behavior. To accept machinery and chemical aids which increase yields and save time, as Vasilika's farmers have done, presumes that they place a value both on quantity of production and also on man-hours of work. In other words, they run their farms, at least partly, from the standpoint of rational economic efficiency. Actual accomplishment of efficiency is far from complete in Vasilika. Our point here has to do with attitudes and tendencies.

The tobacco crop gives an even greater cash yield than cotton in relation to the investment, and its cycle of production fits well into otherwise slack periods. Vasilika's farmers would prefer to raise more tobacco, but the acreage devoted to this plant is centrally controlled by the Greek government. Each year, farmers are assigned the right to plant a specific number of *stremata* to tobacco, with the variations dependent on the anticipated world market for the crop.

Men plow tobacco fields in November at about the same time and in the same way as they do the wheat fields. In December, the men prepare the frames for the tobacco seed beds, and the women plant and tend the seeds. The seed beds are usually near the farmer's house. During this month, the canes which will later be used for hanging the tobacco are cut and stored. The villagers use burlap lightly stretched over reed frames to protect the seedlings from the cold

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 63 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

night. In October, the dried tobacco is pressed into bales by machines the farmers have for the purpose, and is then ready for sale.

A farmer can get 720 *okadhes* of tobacco from 6 *stremata* of land, and if he succeeds in selling the entire crop at 30 drachmas an *oka*, he receives the equivalent of $720. This is a very good income, indeed, especially when it is added to that derived from cotton.

Vasilika farmers are obviously in need of some capitalization to finance what have become considerable investments necessary for producing their wheat, cotton, and tobacco. Whether or not the farmers' savings would be adequate to finance their crops, the fact is that Vasilika farmers do not want to use their accumulated savings to invest in their own farms. Cash drachma savings are exchanged for gold English sovereigns or French or Italian specie, which accumulations are then set aside for the dowries of the girls of the family or to pay for the education of a son. The only notable exception to this use of savings is that the farmer who becomes wealthy enough to feel that his obligations to his children are taken care of may buy land if the opportunity presents itself. At the same time that the farmer does not want to spend savings on the current production of his crops, he is eager for an increased cash income to secure the future of his children. Increased cash income is possible only through investment in his farm. How does he get out of the dilemma? He willingly accepts credit from the Agricultural Bank of Greece. In addition, farmers accept from the bank the needed seed, artificial fertilizers, and chemical weed killers and insect sprays. March is the month in which the loans are made by the bank, so that the farmers always receive their money before Easter. Both the manager of the Agricultural Bank in Levadhia and we were aware of the fact that some of the money was used for Easter finery and Easter feasting. We had the impression that the farmers considered the loan as cash income to be spent as they wished. The repayments of principle and interest due in October were viewed by the farmers as something like an additional expense or tax chargeable against current income from the produce, and in this sense, not as expenditure of savings.

Miscellaneous Crops

Each household maintains a small kitchen garden near the cotton fields. This location permits the farmers to irrigate and to tend to the garden at the same time they work with the cotton. Both men and women work in the gardens to raise tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, squash, and melons of various kinds, but only to the extent necessary for immediate consumption by the household and its hired farm labor through the growing season. No effort is made to produce surplus for canning or for any other kind of home processing. Besides the summer vegetable gardens, in the early spring, the women of a few households fence off a rectangular area near the houses and plant spring onions, lettuce, spinach, and a type of lima bean called *kukya*. The wire or reed fenc-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

ing keeps out both animal and human thieves. These small plots are not carefully tended and their produce is consumed in a few weeks.

Some mention of the most important vegetable food for the villagers may be included: the wild greens (*khorta*) that grow at the edges of the fields and on the hillside. Collecting the greens, which entails finding, recognizing, and cutting them close to the ground with a small knife, is another task of the women and young girls. Some greens are available all year round and children can collect them when the women are busy. However, on occasion, even men and boys will gather a few on their way home from the fields. *Khorta* are not served every day by any means, but they are a fairly common article of diet.

Some fruit trees are cultivated on the village lands. One farmer has as many as ten apricot trees in his cotton fields, but most have a cherry tree or two in the vineyard, perhaps several fig and peach trees in the wheat fields, and an occasional pear, quince, pomegranate, and mulberry tree on some other holdings. The fruits are eaten as they ripen, except that the women prepare from some of them the sweet preserves which are a necessary adjunct of village hospitality. Homemade *gliko kutalyu* (sweet jam) usually lasts through to midwinter, but after that, the villagers buy what they need.

Home canning or other food preservation, therefore, is not a significant addition to the annual locally produced food supply in Vasilika. Even the recognized need for more fruit preserves has not impelled the women to try to convince their husbands to increase the size of orchards. Tomato paste is an important condiment in village cooking, but again, the farming households buy the commercially canned paste, and the women do not prepare any themselves, although, as we have seen, they raise some tomatoes.

Government agricultural extension agents made an effort in 1954 to convince the young girls to can pears and plums as part of a competition. The government recommended fruit canning to the rural women for several reasons: to improve the winter diet without additional cost, and to encourage the increased cultivation of fruit trees as one means of improving drainage on the land. But there has been no increase in canning or in fruit production, and by 1959, even the prize certificates, which had been displayed on a wall of the *saloni* of the house in 1955 and had drawn our attention to the campaign, had disappeared. When asked, the farmers say they could not adequately guard so many trees and the ripe fruit might be stolen. "Why should our family raise fruit for others to eat?" they said. They shrug their shoulders at the soil drainage argument.

The effect of planting fruit trees is, of course, not immediately visible, nor could an eventual improvement in drainage, if it did occur, be an obvious demonstration of the efficacy of orchards, for the cause-and-effect relationships between the two might be obscured, for the farmers, by all the other variables which affect drainage. The reluctance to embark on long-range improvements which are backed by abstract scientific knowledge not directly observable in the farmer's own experience is in direct contrast to his willingness to try short-range experiments the results of which are easily and immediately demonstrable. Indeed, in 1955, the school teacher was criticized for having the school children

help in the care of fruit trees that the provincial government had arranged to plant on the highway near the village.

The farmers are willing to try some variations if they can use the techniques they know and understand. Cotton prices had been low in 1958. In 1959, therefore, about four or five of Vasilika's farmers planted some of their cotton lands as melon patches, intending to sell the produce in Levadhia or in Athens. By 1961, they had gone back to raising cotton, because the experiment had failed. One of Vasilika's farmers prefers to use his irrigated land as a truck farm, and he and his son sell the produce in the surrounding villages. He argues that with a vegetable crop the cash returns are faster and he incurs fewer debts.

Livestock

Each of the farm-owning households also maintains some animals. One or two horses, a mule or a donkey, some five to twenty sheep, and one or two goats constitute the range of livestock ownership for each household. The horses, as we have seen, pull the plow and the cultivators in the fields. Together with the mules and donkeys, they also serve as pack animals. The pack saddle of wood and leather is of a design that has remained virtually unchanged from Homeric times. It is used not only for carrying loads, but also for carrying people who ride sidesaddle among the paths, through the fields, and between the villages. Sidesaddle is the normal riding position for both men and women, but in the spring, when the horses are let out to pastfre on the hillside, the young men of the village sometimes ride them home bareback, astride, galloping and whooping in what they call *kaowboi* fashion.

The villagers do not give their animals individual names, and they take no particular care to keep them physically comfortable. They will hitch them in the shade of a tree in the fields if that is possible, but the farmers may not remove the saddles for an entire day. The animals are beaten with switches and kicked to make them work, and children are permitted to tease donkeys. Nevertheless, the villagers occasionally pat one of their beasts and sometimes encourage children to kiss the ears of a horse and to feed it a lump of sugar.

Sheep, except for the lambs, are cared for by the shepherds. Of a hardy mountain breed capable of surviving the rigors of Greek pasturage and climate, the sheep as milk and wool producers augment the food supply and sometimes the cash of the farmers. Sheep milk is rarely drunk in liquid form, but yoghurt and cheese are prepared from it. The white cheese is a staple of the villagers' diet. They eat yoghurt less frequently and prepare it only as a special dish in milk season.

The villagers raise a special lamb each year to slaughter at Easter, but otherwise rarely eat lamb or mutton. They will consume a sheep that dies of age or disease, and they slaughter sheep for some special occasion such as a wedding, or someone's name day. At shearing time, wool is boiled in large kettles, washed in the river, sent to town for carding, and then dyed and spun into thread at home by the women.

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Paleo Corinthes

[Villages of the Plains]

lished by 1952. Through their instrumentality a series of important changes have come to the agriculture of the village. Fertilizer, bought through the cooperatives, has played its usual role in increasing wheat yields. In addition, a new variety of wheat has been introduced by the agricultural extension agent; this has still further increased the harvest, so that in 1956 the farmers counted on between 200 and 300 okes of wheat per stremma, compared with their prewar expectation of 80 to 100. The co-ops also have been able to buy two tractors and two harvesting machines that cultivate all the crop land of the community. These machines are hired out to neighboring villages when not needed in Old Corinth, and bring in a fair sum of money.

The most significant step, however, has been the drilling of irrigation wells. Irrigation began on a modest scale before the war, but in 1947 fuel for the pumping engines was hard to come by and many of the thirty wells the village then possessed were not used fully. By 1956 the number of wells and pumps had increased to 163, and all were in full use. Most of the suitable land in the village has come under irrigation. On this land, the villagers raise garden vegetables, especially tomatoes, and despatch them daily to the Athens market by truck. The result, in terms of money income, is spectacular. I was assured that a farm now yields ten times the income it supplied before the war.

Old Corinth has also benefited from the revival of tourism. In 1955, some 72,000 tourists visited the archaeological museum and the ruins on the outskirts of the village; and most of these visitors left at least some small change behind them in one of the coffee houses or in the new tourist restaurant which the government constructed in 1955. Moreover, Old Corinth lies near the new electric power line. Electricity came to the village for the first time in 1956. Of all the changes benefiting them in

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1
Kotta

[Hill Villages]

727 example. I even saw two fine Swiss watches on the wrists of
621 young men dressed in homespun.

[571] In the immediate postwar period, Kotta benefited somewhat
[657] from government help. The villagers were given glass to repair the windows of their houses, and some lumber for doors and window frames, so that their houses are in better repair today [491] than in 1947. In 1954 a stout stone bridge was built across the stream with government funds, and the villagers made a rude road to connect Kotta with the outside world. Vehicles can therefore come into the village, though few come, since the villagers have little need of anything from beyond their own small valley.

[241] Their agriculture is much the same as before, with corn al-
[233] most the sole crop. The village flock of sheep is slowly growing back to prewar proportions, thanks in part to the government's having given each family four sheep as a start. The [492] village also has a few cattle – another government gift – which not only yield milk but are harnessed to the plows as well. All this represents a return to familiar patterns.

x 178 The only agricultural innovation that has so far come to Kotta
241 is the experimental sowing of alfalfa on one of the good acres
233 of bottom land. This measure was recommended to the village by a government extension agent in the hope of remedying one
● [242] of the crying weaknesses of its traditional economy – the lack of winter fodder for animals. Leaves cut from trees and dried cornstalks have been normal winter fare for cattle and sheep; and since the village stands more than two thousand feet above sea level, the winter is both long and severe. As a result the animals emerge thin and weak from the winter months. Yet the villagers are not altogether convinced that the new crop is worth while. Alfalfa was planted for the first time in 1955, and while it did help to feed the cattle, the new crop occupied one of the best pieces of bottom land the village possesses, where

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957

EH1 Greece EH1
Cherasia

[Hill Villages]

thus prevent, or at least make more difficult, any future guerrilla action based upon the upper village.

The result of these expenditures is clearly visible today. The village looks handsomer than ever before; the sound of flowing water resounds refreshingly beside the neatly paved square in the center of the village, and the bright new tile roofs of the village shine in the sun. Only the houses of Nea Eleftherohori rival the impressive outward appearance of Cherasia, and the public structures of Nea Eleftherohori are far inferior to the new ones of the Thessalian village.

Nor have governmental efforts ended there. An agricultural extension agent visits Cherasia once or twice a month – a far more frequent visitation than I found in any other village. He attempted to establish viticulture and fruit trees in the village; but the vines perished, and the fruit trees are still spindly saplings, not yet bearing anything. Finally, additional water works are in process of construction, on the strength of a loan from the Ministry of Interior, issued free of interest and repayable in installments, starting only after five years. When this is finished, there will be enough water to irrigate 50 stremmata (12½ acres) of bottom land, and thus open up a new range of agricultural possibilities for the village.

Certainly, no one can say that either money or skill has been stinted in trying to make the life of Cherasia tolerable for its inhabitants. Yet it was perfectly apparent in 1956 that the effort had been totally inadequate. The people of the village were sullen and suspicious, and felt no gratitude toward the government authorities who had done so much for them. The spirit of the village seemed almost the same as in 1947, with the difference that now the rightists were again on top, and the majority saw little hope for gaining even the nighttime control their party had enjoyed in 1947. In talking with one or two of the villagers I gained the impression that they perversely hoped the

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[435]
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/45 cont./

Sickle	2	40	
Axes	1	70	
Wagons	1	2,500	
			4,200
		Grand total	31,510

A one crop farm does not offer regular income year after year. Due to diversity of climatic conditions there are on the average 3 good years to one poor year. Because of the recent settlement of the farmers their needs are great not only for their families but also for their farms, such as tools, animals, stables, barns, better houses and payment of their loans. The poor years increase the debts of the farmer tremendously and if unable to pay them he tries to find a refuge by telling lies.

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The Pattern of Land use. One of the greatest troubles that the farmer of Megali Vrisi has is in getting to and from his fields. His share of land which is composed of 45 stremas (10 1/2 acres), is divided into 7 fields. The smallest piece is 1/4 of an acre and the largest 2 acres. The government in its endeavor to give equal chance to all farmers has divided the land into /46/ 7 categories according to fertility and the distance from the village. Thus the nearest field is 1/5 of a mile and the farthest one is 4 1/2 miles. This type of division, besides consuming time to and from the fields and tiring the animals with unnecessary walking, also reduces the productiveness through poor management of the fields. Rotation is neglected since the farmers having their fields in certain section have to agree on crop plantation with their neighbors. The fencing of the individual fields is impossible and anyone can pasture any field after the crops are removed. There is a law that gives the right of pasturing the fields by anyone after the crops are removed.

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We can summarize the good and bad points for such a distribution of land.

Advantages:

1. Gives equal opportunity to each farmer to have equal share of fertile as well as of infertile land.

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This will give a chance for every farmer to have few and those who have too many will be obliged to reduce them due to taxes. 233

5. Every farmer who owns a pair of oxen and two /50/ cows will not pay any tax on them.

6. Those who have 5 heads of cattle will pay 40 cents per head; 5 to 7 $1.00 per head; 10 to 15, $5 per head. Also the scale of taxing should be based not only on the number of head but on the productive capacity of each cow. The better producer will pay less tax and poorest kind of cow will pay the highest.

The above is not only a measure to prevent increase in the number of cows, but also for their improvement so that the pasture can be of the utmost use for greater returns.

The pasture is common and all the animals of the village can be pastured together. Another old law which still exists for the benefit of those who have sheep, is the right of pasturing the fields after crops are removed. The owner of the field has no right to prevent others from pasturing his field after he removes his crop. The only value it has is this that everyone tries to keep livestock so as to get full advantage of his pasture rights. 233 423

The pastures are pastured the year round and year after year they are depleted from some of the best pasture plants. The only grass that occupies a large part of the best pasture is the quack grass, the thistles and wild rasberry plants. Recently the interest of a few leading farmers was directed towards improving the pasture. Some experiments with rotation, the animals /51/ at different seasons on different sections of the pasture gave best results. Harrowing early in the spring, application of fertilizers and complete rest for 3 years were methods advised. 233 246 [137] [242]

The largest part of their farming capital is composed of animals whose feeding largely depends on the pasture. If the farmers continue depleting their pasture from the continuous pasturing the time will come when a future generation will be unable to keep animals. [241] 511 [471]

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that are shallow, that is where the top soil is 5 to 7 inches, the [407]
iron plow cannot work so successfully as the wooden plow. It goes too deep and brings up the raw infertile soil which destroys the field for many years. The wooden plow does not turn the furrow over but leaves it in the place, thus the field is plowed without bringing to the surface the subsoil. The farmers think the iron 241
plow poisons the soils of this kind and never use an iron plow on 242
such soils but only a wooden one. The fields for wheat seed are plowed from 3 to 7 times before seeding. It has been a custom to plow the same field as many times as possible. The common expression is: "The more you work the soil the more you get." This is of course a general principle and does not hold true under all conditions.

Manure is seldom applied since almost all of it is used as fuel. 241
Each farmer on the average has 4 animals and they are in pasture 237
all day the year around. What little manure he gets he uses for 372
fuel.

Chemical fertilizers are too expensive and the farmer is not acquainted with them. He still talks about them as "fine soil filled in sack and colored with lime."

They understand well the importance of manure but /60/ cannot afford to use it for their fields. One of the outstanding problems which is that of a fuel to substitute for dried manure should be attacked first before trying to do anything with farming. The [433]
productivity of the land is decreasing year after year. The humus, what little there is, is depleted and the fields need it in order to continue cultivating them. In one survey, I found out that 92% of the manure is used as fuel and only 8% is applied to the fields. This study also revealed that by applying the manure to [433]
the field the increased production buys 2 1/2 times as much fuel of lignite coal. After proving to them the importance of the [354]
manure they were convinced of the profit in buying lignite coal, but a special stove so constructed as to fulfil the needs of a farm family was not discovered.

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Rotation of crops is neglected due to the high price of wheat. The best land is put into wheat and the poor land into oats and barley. The recent introduction of vetch may revolutionize the rotation system and may help answer the livestock management problems.

The Local Groceries. Out of five groceries two have closed due to depression years of 1930-33. The three groceries are doing well only on books. Their /61/ non-collected capital exceeds 3 times their active capital. The cooperative grocery gives keen competition but its credit is limited to members and it has a successful way of collecting the debts at threshing time with the cooperatives' threshing machine. Just before threshing the three local groceries treat their customers with wine and whisky so as to be able to collect their debts. All kinds of methods are used at harvest time.

The local grocery owners do their farming too and in most cases all their farming jobs are done by the farmers in paying their debts. No grocery man could make his living out of grocery business alone, but keeps it for spending his leisure time.

PART IV. HABITS OF CONSUMPTION

Household Expenditures. People who lose all they had two to four times in their lifetime will not want to buy anything unless its need is essential. Life is more or less simplified and the household expenditures run very low. In one of the accounts we find that for household expenditures the farmer spent 2.500 drs. ($16.66). This sum is too high. We must remember that these farmers were just settled and had nothing whatsoever to start with.

/62/ A few small chairs, a rough table, a few wooden spoons and a few copper kitchenware make the kitchen's utensils. Pictures of a few relatives and their own hang on the wall with a few handmade embroideries.

/71 cont./ If a mother
or a father is unable to punish their children, they report /72/ them to the teacher and he gives the proper punishment. Students stand at attention and salute their teachers wherever they see him. They are ready to fulfill his orders regardless of the parents' approval. The parents have no right to complain about any kind of punishment to the student by the teacher, regardless of how severe it is.

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Every child from 6 to 13 years of age has to complete the grammar school. Education is compulsory by the government. A father who suspends his child from school is fined.

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Besides the grammar school there was another agent that acted as an educational organization for adult education. The graduates of the grammar school of the ages from 14 to 20 years were organized in winter farm courses. Their schedule of lessons was based on the farm survey of their village and on the questionnaire which was put to them to find out what they would like to learn during winter months. The lessons were mostly field work and very little class work. Each student, besides following the different jobs of his father's occupation, takes active part in a cooperative project. This cooperative project is the /73/ central theme around which the different lessons are organized. The project is based on some common but unknown factor that the students try to investigate. Special committees from among the group are appointed to divide the jobs at different seasons to every one. Careful accounts are kept of the share of labor of each student, of the cost of the project, and of the climatic conditions under which the project was conducted. At the end of the project year, each student receives his share of income according to the number of hours he worked.

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The most effective phase of this project is the yearly demonstration of the work done by the students to the farmers of the village, the work done, the money spent and results obtained. It is one of the convincing methods to show the farmer how to improve his methods of farming by introducing either better

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/73 cont./ fertilizing methods or rotation methods or introduction of new legume plants or a new variety of wheat. As a rule, their effect on the farmers is great with definite results.

Thus the future farmers of Megali Vrisi, working cooperatively, felt the need of adopting new methods and passing on to others the results of their /74/ investigations. It is surprising to know how effectively the cooperative project has tied up these fellows in undertaking to do other jobs useful for their village.

The individual project idea was a failure. People who live in the same village, still under the patriarchial type of family life and whose problems are so closely interwoven, cannot help but cooperate and support whole-heartedly cooperative work. This very same idea led those boys to build a community hall and a stage for theatrical shows. The whole structure was built by personal work and what money was saved from theatrical shows at Christmas. The group learned Christmas carols and sang them to every house in the village. The contributions from this event were used for the poor of the village. The small reforestation project which was started by this group has led to the development of the "Day of the Green", at which day everyone in the village planted a tree on the hill.

The yearly athletic day event that provides an enjoyable gathering for the village was planned by the young men.

/75/ One can easily foresee the future of such a community which will be handled by people who learned to cooperate so well in their youth. This vocational education meant more to the lives of these young men than what they got from the grammar school.

Invasion of adult education. The Greek government, feeling great responsibility toward these people, who during the wars of 1912-1913, 1914-1918, and 1920-1922, lost the chance of attending schools, provided special evening lessons in each village. The lessons were handled by the teacher in the local school and thus many of these men and women had a chance to learn how

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to read and write. Besides this, agricultural lectures were given to the farmers by the agriculturist of the area during the winter months on different topics concerning the farming life of the area. A series of 5 lectures were organized by the priest of the village on different topics such as history, travel, biography, and inventions. Thus the farmers of Megali Vrisi had an ample chance to get whatever they could from these different agencies.

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/76/ Part VII Religion

Magic. The people of Megali Vrisi, due to numerous activities of an educational character that have been established there, find themselves in a transition period of trying to put aside old beliefs and adopt new ones. They still believe that certain people in the village have power to command the spirits and perform miracles. A young man who thinks that his sweetheart does not like him finds as an outlet the consultation of magicians and their command of the spirits to change her mind. If a member of the family is in a foreign country or on travel the magicians are asked to order the spirits to protect them. A pregnant woman desiring to give birth to a boy instead of a girl asks the magicians to act favorably to her desires. The people who perform the role of a magician are old women with suspicious looks. The same women may act as mid-wives, too.

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Certain signs handed down from generation to generation are believed to be true. A black cat crossing the road is thought a bad sign. If you meet a priest early in the morning, they think the whole day will be filled with failures. Dogs crying mean somebody is going /77/ to die in the neighborhood. When the eyelid moves fast some good news is coming.

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The above are a few of the good and bad luck signs.

Religious beliefs. Almost every farmer has a Saint in whom he believes strongly. The ikon of the Saint, in front of which he

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